THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed..." Peter Maurin

February/March 2010 **Price: For whatever it's worth**

A Hill in Bethlehem

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

Editor's Note: In December, Claire accompanied storyteller, Jay O'Callahan on a research trip to Israel/Palestine.

The hill belonging to Daher Nasser's family sits southwest of Bethlehem. Daher's grandfather purchased this land, a total of 100 acres, in 1916 when Palestine was under Ottoman rule. He dug caves beneath its slope, fashioning them into beautiful domed dwellings for his family, cultivated vineyards and groves on the soil above, and taught his children to love this fertile plot like their mother.

Despite appearances of solidity, the hill is an uncertain place. Five expanding Jewish settlements encircle the property. The Israeli Wall, when completed, will enclose the settlements and the Palestinian farm, even though all lie inside the West Bank, well east of the Green Line. The Nassers first learned of Israel's confiscation plans in 1991 and have waged a costly legal battle ever since.

Ten years ago, the Nassers began a new tactic. They invited internationals to come plant trees on their hill because Israeli law permits the state to grab land which has not been cultivated for three years. Dubbed the Tent of Nations, the project has attracted an increasing number of visitors and volunteers over the decade. Four thousand came last year alone.

A boulder marks the entrance to Daher's farm; Israeli soldiers put the stone there to keep out settlers who periodically came in with bulldozers to uproot the Nasser's trees. It is a desolate spot on this Saturday evening in December as my cab driver looks out on quickly darkening fields. We are in the middle of haggling over how much it will cost for him to wait one hour for my visit, when two soldiers, their automatics raised, silently appear at the car's side window and order us to get out. Alarmed and still panting from their run up the hill, they begin to inspect the cab, their weapons rapidly swishing over every nook and crevice. One asks to see the cab driver's papers. In the darkness, none of us is distinct.

Grace Duffy

"I'm sorry we have frightened you," I say to the soldiers who are young enough to be my sons. They look at me blankly as they continue to circle the car. "No English," says one. The cab driver nervously motions for me to be quiet. But I persist. Reaching into my satchel, I pull out a small, stuffed envelope labeled, "Alice's ashes."

"This is what is hugely lost—her potential," the minister had said during that hot July memorial service where everyone sweated, wept, and moved as if in a dream. "Alice identified with the whole world. She belongs to the whole world. So family and friends will take her ashes as they travel and return her to the earth."

I had wondered where to do this in Palestine, a cluttered, suffocating place that barely has room for the living. After hearing a young German describe the Tent of Nations during a bus ride to East Jerusalem, I decided to bury Alice's ashes among Daher's groves.

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Mozambique Reflections

by Art Laffin

Editor's Note: Art Laffin is a long-time peace activist and member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker community in Washington, DC. In 1999, while working with the homeless, his brother Paul was murdered. In 2009, Art was invited to Mozambique by an Italian peace and justice community to speak on forgiveness.

November 30- I write from Maputo, the capital of Mozambique. Last month I knew very little about Mozambique. Now I am immersed in my first African experience. The Community of Sant Égidio (CSE) has invited me here and, they have given me a great welcome.... It is still spring-time here so I'm lucky it's not too hot.... Yesterday, I walked through a good part of the city with CSE members Joao and Roque. Joao speaks some English and has been very good in explaining different things to me. The official language here is Portuguese. Changana is the local language. I saw some of the government buildings, the main hospital, the central train station, and the main market. We also walked awhile along a roadway overlooking the beautiful Indian Ocean. In the various neighborhoods, there are pockets of extreme poverty and substandard housing. Near the business district and along the seaside the more affluent reside in good housing. There are also many street beggars and people try to sell you things.... Many of the streets are named after Marxist and socialist leaders, from Karl Marx to Salvador Allende.

...I went to Mass last night at a Franciscan parish. It was great to worship with so many new friends on this first Advent Sunday, and

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Bethlehem

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She once visited Bethlehem and would have delighted in this oasis of internationalism.

I show my envelope to the scowling soldier who examines it beneath the barrel of this gun. *Does he suspect explosives?* The weapon's tiny scope light illuminates the packet's label which is written in the looping script of the dead woman's mother.

Given the language barrier it seems too difficult to explain Alice Swanson to the soldier. I cannot tell him she was the high school and college sweetheart of my oldest son, a radiant woman with a ready smile and enormous curiosity, who, at twenty-two, had already lived on three continents, had plans to visit more, and had just been hired at an institute promoting peace in the Middle East when a trash truck smashed into her while she was cycling to work. A stupid death. Pointing to the pathetic package, I simply say, "My daughter. I want to bury her here and say some prayers."

"Okay. Sorry," says the soldier with a softer face, and then turning to the driver murmurs, "Ma'asalame," which in Arabic means, "Peace be with you." The two men disappear into the darkness as quickly as they came. Feeling guilty for the trouble I have caused, I pay the driver double his original fee and he too evaporates into the night.

Daher, who has seen the fracas, beckons to me from the other side of the boulder. A burly man, dressed in boots and jeans, he is used to soldiers welcoming his guests. As we climb the hill to his farm, he launches into an enthusiastic description of the Tent of Nations, telling me how people from all over the world have come to plant trees. He points out a small garden that children from Bethlehem planted during summer camp and a stone beside the orchard gate on which he has written: "We refuse to be enemies."

"Everyone is welcome here," he says, "even the settlers, as long as they don't bring guns." Once a woman from the adjacent settlement of Ne've Daniel came to visit. It took her seven years to summon the courage. She was amazed to learn her Palestinian neighbor had no running water or electricity while she lived in a neighborhood of swimming pools and well-lit houses. "The important thing is the contact," Daher says. "We need to make contact with each other."

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The suggestion surprises me. Because of the settlements, only 13% of the land in the Bethlehem governate is now available for Palestinian use. Throughout the West Bank, farmers are resisting Israeli encroachment with weekly marches and public plantings. One village flew kites and played soccer to stall the bulldozers. Still, the Wall lengthens. Soldiers fire tear gas or live bullets. Night raids on the homes of Palestinian leaders continue. Settlements expand. *What good is contact?*

Atop the hill are two single-storied buildings—a reception hall and a modest dorm where Daher and the volunteers sleep. On the dorm's outer wall is a mosaic of the Holy Family made from bits of glass gleaned from the trash. He regrets I cannot see the beauty of the place in daylight. He serves me hot tea with mint and offers me cookies and chocolate.

Sarah Young

I start to explain the reason for my visit but end up swallowing a sob. This is my eighth day in Israel/Palestine and I have heard many stories. Some heroic, others tragic. "We are stuck," seems to be the common refrain on both sides of the divide. And there is my own grief over the deaths that came without warning during the past year. Daher watches with compassionate curiosity as I stammer through a description of Alice and my wish to leave some of her ashes on his land. The request troubles him. A Lutheran, he does not believe in cremation.

Outside, the two of us walk a winding path through Daher's trees. His faint flashlight illuminates almond saplings and grape vines. There are orange and fig and olive groves. He explains how he waters the young trees, carrying up the buckets by hand, until the roots deepen and mature. The night is windy and the sky full of stars. Down below, we can see the bright lights of the encircling settlements. By day, their houses, stacked like Lego blocks atop the hills of the West Bank, appear immovable. Here in the dark, they are just floating points of light, less solid than Daher's groves.

Throughout our walk, I look for a place to leave Alice's ashes but Daher refuses my every suggestion. What if her ashes should resurface when they till the soil or what if the settlers come back with their bulldozers to uproot the trees? "She was a good woman," he keeps saying. The wind rustles the leaves of a carob tree. Its thick, widespread branches indicate it is old and established and therefore less likely to be tilled or bulldozed. Surely Alice's ashes can rest beneath its roots undisturbed. Daher disagrees.

I make other requests. At the beginning of a small orchard, perhaps planted in memoriam, is a stone upon which is scrawled a Native American poem, the same poem Alice's parents recited every Tuesday (because she died on a Tuesday) during the first year of her death. Convinced God has brought me to this spot, I plead with Daher to let me bury the ashes here. He refuses.

Aware of my disappointment, Daher leads me to the chapel that he and his father carved out of a cave. The domed room is roughly hewn, cold and without electricity. There is a podium and rows of chairs, set up as if for Sunday service, and on the ceiling, a wobbly mosaic of a pointy yellow star. Were Christ to be born today, it would be here.

Daher prays with evangelical fervor while I make my petitions in silence. "Let's sing," he says, teaching me the Arabic refrain to "Praise Ye the Lord." In the chilly December darkness, we sing with abandon.

Allelu. Allelu. Allelu. Allelu.
Sabbihu El Rab!
Allelu. Allelu. Allelu. Allelu.
Praise ye the Lord!

"You feel strong now because you pray to God," Daher proclaims. He continues to believe it is my encounter with the soldiers that has left me unsteady. "I am not afraid of the soldiers," I reassure him. What has left me weepy are the losses I still cannot accept.

People appear so solid. We hug them, hear their voices, interpret the changing expressions on their faces and then, without warning, they become packets of ashes that fit in a satchel. I want to tell Daher it is his bravery and generous hope that also brings tears to my eyes. What if his trees don't stop the encroaching settlements? What if the bulldozers return and the groves are uprooted and turned into fertilizer for the lawns of Lego houses?

In my pocket is an envelope of cash, a portion of a friend's inheritance from a wealthy aunt. "Use it as you see fit," my friend had said before I left for the Middle East. I give the envelope to Daher. This gift is enough to buy forty trees, a good-sized grove. As we part, I make him promise he will only spend the money on trees. "Buy them for Alice," I order. We shake hands and then Daher, says with a wide sweep of his hand. "Pray to God to take away *all* the problems from here."

"Of course, I will," I say feeling invigorated from our visit.

Nativities are never what we expect. The prophets predicted a saving king, not an infant born in a cave to an impoverished couple. Were those first adoring visitors, who must have come bearing their own losses, startled to find such a frail means to their salvation? Who could have predicted the durability of this birth or its power to hearten? God makes contact with us.

I take the back road out from Daher's hill, the one that does not go past the soldiers. Outside the Bethlehem checkpoint, I catch a cab into East Jerusalem with a laconic driver. Five minutes of silence pass before he quietly announces that his wife delivered a baby that morning. Their second child, she is a little girl. Ω

Guantánamo Reunion

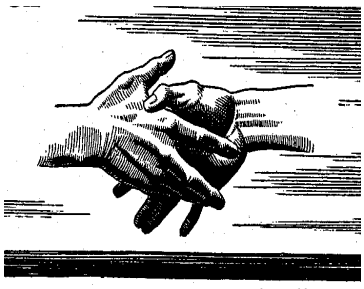
Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a January 12, BBC news stories. During that same week, Catholic Workers joined an 11-day fast in Washington, DC challenging President Obama to keep his promise to close the US prison in Guantánamo.

Why would a former Guantánamo Bay prison guard track down two of his former captives—two British men—and agree to fly to London to meet them?

"You look different without a cap."

"You look different without the jump suits."

With those words, an extraordinary reunion gets under way.



Rockwell Kent

The last time Ruhal Ahmed met Brandon Neely, he was "behind bars, behind a cage and [Brandon] was on the other side."

The location had been Camp X-Ray—the high-security detention camp run by the United States in Guantánamo Bay. Mr. Ahmed, originally from Tipton in the West Midlands, was among several hundred foreign terror suspects held at the center.

Mr. Neely was one of his guards....

The journey of reconciliation began almost a year ago in Huntsville, Texas. Mr Neely, 29, had left the US military in 2005 to become a police officer and was still struggling to come to terms with his time as a guard at Guantánamo.

He felt anger at a number of incidents of abuse he says he witnessed, and guilt over one in particular.

Highly controversial since it opened in 2002, Guantánamo prison was set up by President George Bush in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks to house suspected "terrorists." But it has been heavily divisive and President Barack Obama has said it has "damaged [America's] national security interests and become a tremendous recruiting tool for al Qaeda."

Mr. Neely recalls only the good publicity in the US media.

"The news would always try to make Guantánamo into this great place," he says, "Like '[prisoners] were treated so great.' No it wasn't. Here I was basically just putting innocent people in cages."

The prisoners arriving on planes, in goggles and jump suits, from Afghanistan were termed by then US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld as the "worst of the worst." But after getting to know some of the English-speaking detainees, Mr. Neely started to have doubts....

He recalls how, when he and Mr. Ahmed chatted through the bars at Guantánamo they had a surprising amount in common.... "He would sask, 'You ever listen to Eminem or Dr. Dre?' and he threw off a little rap, and it was just funny. I thought how could it be somebody is here who's doing the same stuff that I do when I'm back home?"

Mr. Neely was 22 when he worked at the camp and left after six months to serve in Iraq. But after quitting the military his doubts about Guantánamo began to crystallize. This led to a spontaneous decision last year to reach out to his former prisoners.

"I was pretty new to Facebook and decide to type in their names to see if their profiles popped up and I came across Shafiq's Facebook page. I decided to send him a little e-mail," says Mr. Neely.

Released in 2004 after being held for two years, Mr. Rasul and Mr. Ahmed had been captured in Afghanistan on suspicion of links to the Taliban. They said they were beaten by US troops, although this was disputed by the US government at the time.

After all that, the Facebook communique was a shock to Mr. Rasul.

"At first I couldn't believe it. Getting a message from an ex-guard saying that what happened to us in Guantánamo was wrong was surprising more than anything."

To Mr. Neely's astonishment he received a reply and the pair began an exchange of e-mails. It was at this point that the BBC [arranged for them] to meet in person....

[Just prior to their meeting,] Mr. Rasul says, "There's a few people in my family who have asked 'What do you want to meet

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Mozambique

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the singing was beautiful.

This morning, I was given a tour of the DREAM Center, which was established in 2002 by CSE to help people with HIV/AIDS and other illnesses. This DREAM (an acronym for Drug Resources Enhancement Against AIDS and Malnutrition) program is truly a miracle to behold. When everyone, including the World Health Organization, was saying that AIDS could not be treated in Africa, and that only prevention measures could be implemented, the CSE believed otherwise. With over one million people suffering from AIDS in Mozambique alone, the CSE knew they had to do something to help. Having developed strong relationships with people here, before and after the civil war they helped to mediate, the CSE saw it as their responsibility to help their friends. And so they did. The CSE has established various DREAM centers not only in Mozambique but throughout Africa. Indeed, personalism practiced at its best!

The DREAM center in Maputo provides a wide range of services including counseling, on-site lab analysis of bloodwork as well as diagnosis for the AIDS disease for each patient, a pharmacy, and a food distribution program. As I write this at the DREAM Center, mothers and children, and the elderly stream through seeking help. All those who serve the patients radiate a spirit of love and compassion.

...Tomorrow, I will travel outside of Maputo to visit a CSE center that provides a special nutrition program to some 1,000 chronically malnourished children. I will also speak with young people about nonviolence.

December 1- Today is World AIDS Day. Being here in Africa and at the DREAM Center which treats people with AIDS, this day takes on a whole new meaning for me. My heart and prayers go out to all who are suffering from this terrible disease and for all those to combatting it. I pray that there will be a greater awareness among people of faith and conscience in our world to support efforts like the DREAM program of the Community Sant'Egidio to help treat our sisters and brothers suffering from AIDS (see: www.santegidio.org).

Yesterday, I spoke at the Cities for Life conference in Maputo with over 200 people, including many young people, attending. This was just one of 1,000 events coordinated by the CSE taking place around the world to call for the abolition of the death penalty.... A moving excerpt of a letter by executed death row prisoner Dominique Green was read at the conference.

In my talk, I shared the story of my brother Paul's murder and how my faith in God and Jesus carried me through this unspeakable tragedy. I also spoke about Dennis Soutar being a mentally ill homeless man and how he fell through the cracks of our society and ended up killing Paul. I asked people to pray for Dennis who is in a prison hospital in Connecticut for the rest of his life. I also shared about how compassion, love, mercy, and forgiveness is the way to break the cycle of violence, and why the death penalty should be abolished. I spoke of the great work of the Journey of Hope (JOH), Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights, and Murder Victims for Reconciliation to help bring about an end to state-sanctioned murder. I mentioned that five people from JOH were participating in Cities of Life events in other countries: Bill Pelke, co-founder of the JOH and death row exoneree Curtis McCarty were in Italy, murder victim family member Bud Welch was in Belgium, and death row survivors Shujaa Graham and Juan Melindez were in Germany and Spain. I was very humbled by the rousing ovation that I was given.

I used a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. in my talk. I think this quote is especially appropriate as Mr. Obama is to announce tonight to escalate the criminal and sinful war in Afghanistan. Dr. King said: "Love even for enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our world."

December 2- Today marks the 29th anniversary of the martyrdom of Jean Donovan, Sr. Dorothy Kazel, Sr. Ita Ford, and Sr. Maura Clarke—PRESENTE! They were killed in El Salvador in 1980 by a death squad because of their love for the poor, their commitment to uphold the human rights and dignity of the voiceless, and their deep fidelity to Jesus' way of unconditional love. *Deo Gratias* for their faithful lives of courage and hope.

...Yesterday, I visited the Nutrition Center (NC) in Matola, just outside Maputo. The NC is part of the DREAM program.... At NC, CSE members and friends provide a refuge where the poor of the area can play, take showers, and have a nutritious meal. Most of the children wear dirty clothes and many are without shoes. The NC is a sanctuary for these beautiful children. There is also a School of Peace for 25 children and a small kindergarten. Yesterday, some 2,000 children came to the NC. The center uses the biggest pots I have even seen. Every child had pasta, a small piece of beef, half an apple, and clean drinking water.

I spent time with some of the very young children as we watched some of the girls play a creative game of jump rope. As I held little Januario and his baby brother on my lap, I couldn't help but think of my son Carlos and all the other children I know and love. I also thought about the impending escalation of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, and how all the billions of dollars being squandered on our sinful warmaking could be used instead to help these beautiful children at the NC.

Before leaving the NC, I had a meeting with teens who were visiting from a nearby school. I was asked to speak to them about the death penalty and nonviolence. As we sat under a mango tree, we spoke heart to heart. I also shared books by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.....

I leave Mozambique with a profound respect and deep love for all the wonderful people I have met. I am deeply grateful for the CSE's invitation to come and for taking such good care of me during my visit. Everyone I met brought me closer to God and helped deepen my faith in the Gospel.... My new friends of Maputo will always have a special place in my heart. Ω

Not Our Father's or Mother's Military

by Bob Graf

Editor's Note: Bob Graf is a freelance Catholic Worker from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, became "a soldier of Christ," laying down his weapons before the statue of the Black Madonna at Montserrat, Spain. Both before and after his conversion, he was a Catholic; but only after his conversion was his first loyalty to Jesus and not to the state. Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, refused to accept honorary degrees from a Catholic university that had an ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] program, saying it was a violation of her conscience.

Since Dorothy's era, warfare has radically changed. This is not our father or mother's military. After World War II, the military discovered that in combat, just one of four soldiers fired their weapons. So the military developed a new training called "reflexive fire drills" or "reflexive killing." Captain Peter Kilner, a military instructor at West Point, described the training in the movie "Soldier of Conscience." In a paper to The Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics, Kilner writes: "Modern combat training conditions soldiers to act reflexively to stimuli—such as fire commands, enemy contact, or the sudden appearance of a 'target'—and that maximizes soldiers' lethality, but it does so through bypassing their moral autonomy. Soldiers are conditioned to act without considering the moral repercussions of their actions; they are enabled to kill without making the conscious decision to do so." This new method of training has raised the ratio of soldiers firing their weapons to 95%, but, as Kilner points out, with grave consequences "since soldiers may kill reflexively, eventually soldiers return home and reflect on their actions."

The military manuals and rules of engagement for wars have significantly changed over the years. For example the present Army training and leadership manual states: "Your personal values may and probably do extent beyond the Army values, to include such things as political, cultural, and religious beliefs. However, if you're to be an Army leader and a person of integrity, these values must reinforce, not contradict, Army values." Yet the Catholic Catechism states: "The citizen is obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of moral order, to the fundamental rights of

Grace Duffy

persons, or the teachings of the Gospel. Refusing obedience to civil authorities, when their demands are contrary to those of an upright conscience, finds its justification in the distinction between serving God and serving the political community."

After the involuntary Selective Service System was ended in 1972, many colleges and universities for academic and or ethical reasons dropped their military training programs. As the number of colleges and universities willing to offer military training diminished, the military, through the Congress, decided to act. In 1996, Congress passed the Solomon Amendment allowing the Secretary of Defense "to deny all federal grants to institutions of higher education if they prohibit or prevent ROTC or other military recruitment on campus."

The passage of this law forced colleges and universities to choose between being a "partner" or "host" military school. Most schools chose to become "partner" schools, where military recruiters are allowed on campus but the military students at the school are sent to "host" schools for training. This way the partner school maintains all Federal funding and scholarship money without actually having military training on campus. A few schools, including most major Jesuit universities like Marquette, chose to become "host" schools, which offer military training on campus. Unlike other departments, the host university has little control over the curriculum or academic standards of these departments.

Since all colleges and universities, be they partner or host schools, benefit from military scholarships and have access to all Federal grants, why would a private Catholic university choose to be a host school? There seem to be three motivations: money, pride, and honor.

University administrators at Marquette have refused to answer questions about their financial arrangements with the Secretary of Defense. But we do know, from military sources, that additional financial benefits do go to host schools.

Being a major military training base for the region, as Marquette is for 14 local colleges and universities, does bring some honor. Father Robert Wild, S.J., the president of Marquette University, has stated, "I, as President, am proud of Marquette's long-standing affiliation with ROTC." In general, Marquette has ignored the moral and ethical question of military training on campus and has consistently refused to engage in dialog on this moral issue.

Marquette also takes pride in hosting the archives of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. A few years ago, when the resistance to military training on campus was renewed, Marquette started a "Center for Peacemaking." However, the Center has publicly refused to acknowledge

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Military

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the ethical and moral consequences of military training on campus. Marquette University takes great pride in the Catholic Worker, The Peace Center, and the military on campus.

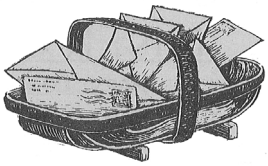
This brings us full circle back to Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Dorothy Day. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius reflects on two leaders and two strategies. "The strategy of Lucifer is simple and seems so light-filled and clear in its direction: to riches (or 'this is mine'), to honor (or 'look at me'), to pride (or '**I** AM...')." Jesus' strategy is also simple, although seemingly paradoxical. "If I have been graced with the gift of poverty ('**He emptied Himself, becoming human**') then I am rich; if I have nothing of myself ('**everything I have is from the Father**') then I am rich; I have no power and I am despised and receive the contempt of the world ('**even to death, death on a cross**'); if I have nothing, my only possession is Christ ('**Christ is God's**') and this is to be really true to myself—the humanity of a person whose whole reality and value is grounded in being created and redeemed in Christ."

Dorothy Day was very clear about the Catholic Worker movement not associating with the government war-making and military machine. Catholic Workers are noted for their resistance to military weapons and training. When a military partner school located an ROTC office in a residential hall named after Dorothy Day, her grandchildren demanded the office be removed or the hall be renamed. The ROTC office was moved.

Marquette and other Catholic universities may need to offer ROTC programs to financially survive. But there is no law forcing them to host the military, to teach and train soldiers on campus in the ways of war and in values contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Perhaps today we need to say to the leaders of Jesuit universities and colleges, "Military teaching and training on campuses is contrary to our Catholic faith and not in harmony with the wishes of our Jesuit father, Ignatius, and our Catholic Worker mother, Dorothy Day. Be faithful to the Gospel and no longer host the Army, Navy/Marines, or Air Force on Catholic campuses." Ω

Letters



Kathleen Edwards

Dear Catholic Workers,
Keep up the wonderful work you do.

I feel so much hope from the stories of so many people all over the world who are doing marvelous things! Peace.

Judy Murtagh
North Chelmsford, Massachusetts

Dear Scott,
Thank you so much for reviewing David Loyn's **In Afghanistan**. Based on your article, I purchased a copy of the book and found it to be as interesting and grim as you portrayed it in your review. It is even more depressing that, even with all this historical knowledge at our disposal, and with a very well-read Commander-in-Chief, we still remain on the destructive course of pouring more troops and treasure into the insatiable maw of death that is Afghanistan.

A friend of mine in the Marines is set to be deployed next year to Afghanistan, and I fear for his life. I have serious doubts that our new surge in troops will make any sort of difference after reading Loyn's book. It is just another example of George Bernard Shaw's pearl of wisdom: "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history."

Bringing this book and others like it to public attention is work that must be done in order to halt that destructive cycle of repitition, and I thank you immensely for doing so.

Alex Jones
Exeter, New Hampshire

To the Editors of *The Catholic Radical*,
I know that I am on the losing side of the battle here, but I feel the duty to weigh in nonetheless.

I was dismayed to read your altered reprint of Peter Maurin's Easy Essay on Personalism. [Masculine pronouns were replaced with feminine pronouns.] As a Maurinophile, a former English teacher, a lover of history, and a very flawed but earnest Truth-seeker, it hit me on many fronts:

It is patronizing to your reader to change pronouns for a politically correct interpretation of inclusivity. If you really feel you must "interpret" Maurin to a modern audience, explain the writer's intent in an editor's note, but let his words stand.

It is a revisionist hsitory you are creating here, with the possible assumption that Maurin would approve of the feminine pronoun to mean mankind. ("Mankind" is the traditional way of describing all of the human race, what today may be described as "humankind.") He was always a traditionalist and were he in his grave and not in his Eternal Reward, it is easy to picture him rolling over in it, to see his Easy Essay so changed. Further, if I may make a wild extrapolation, I am hard pressed to imagine him praying to a She-God, or replacing the "hims" with "hers" or "theirs" because Maurin would have theological reasons for not doing so. I have to say I am with him on that.

The revision of any historical piece (as Easy Essays are now) is to load onto it surplus meaning that may change the writer's intent, and it usually serves a different agenda (as using the "she" in place of the "he" for inclusivity serves the feminist one). This is exactly what we rail against the war-mongers for in revisiong history for military or nationalist purposes, so it behooves us not to adopt the same tactics.

Lastly, since you cannot ask Maurin about making these changes, and since he was a stickler not to be edited at all, it is more respectful to our co-founder to let him have his say, as he said it.

Whew! Thanks for letting me have my say. I know you will take this in the good humor in which it is meant, and also in appreciation for all the *Catholic Radical* issues on which I offered no comment, and have thoroughly enjoyed.

Jo Massarelli
Worcester, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: Our dear friend Jo is right that we went beyond Peter Maurin's original intent when we ran his Easy Essay with feminine instead of masculine pronouns. However, we did acknowledge the change in an editor's note. It is our policy not to shorten or alter an author's work without apprising our readers of those changes by means of an editor's note, elipses, or brackets. Gen-

erally, we make those changes for space or clarity, but we recognize that language is ever-changing, and that some previously acceptable terms have become archaic, misleading, or offensive. Because we consider sexism offensive, we have tried to avoid using exclusively male pronouns in reference to men and women. At the same time, we recognize that non-sexist language can be awkward.

In this instance, we chose to use feminine pronouns because Peter's Essay followed a reflection by Dorothy Day, the woman *who implemented Maurin's philosophy of personalism. When the Essay was read aloud at our editorial meeting, a female editor, who prefers masculine pronouns, remarked how the substitution of "she" in this essay struck her personally and powerfully. That power and personal connection is what every author wants and we sought, however imperfectly, to provide.*

Dear Friends,
Thanks for another great isue of *Catholic Radical*.... As a long-time admirer of Judge Goldstone, I grieve his treatment by the Israeli PR machine. My prayers and blessings are with you. Peace!

Kaihsu Tai
Oxford, England

Editor's Note: Rabbi Brant Rosen, a leader of the Jewish Fast for Gaza, addressed an impassioned defense of the Goldstone Report to the American Jewish community in the September 27, 2009, Chicago Tribune.

Claire, Scott, et. al.,
...Although I am an atheist (in some sense a secular Catholic), I find that Catholic Workers actually live their anarchist beliefs in ways I do not, and you all put most other anarchists to shame. I envision an anarchist world in which your ideas and practices would play a large role, despite my different approach to the world.

By the way, I am a nurse at a Catholic hospital where talk about the "mission" is constant, but it is all too often not honored in the breach.... Once again, another year of good works to you.

Joe Peacott
Anchorage, Alaska

Guantánamo

(Continued from Page 3)

someone like that for? The way he treated you; you stay away from him.... If it was me, I'd want to beat him up.'"

After their initial exchange about caps and jump suits, Mr. Neely says, "I am really sorry for the way you were treated when I was there. I'm just as guilty as other people because I took part in it, putting you in a cage...."

Mr. Rasul replies, "...I don't hold you responsible for what happened to me. You were there to do a job... But, when people like yourself basically say the same things that we were saying [about Guantánamo], it helped so much for people to believe that what we were saying was true. So, I appreciate from the bottom of my heart what you've done."

But what were the pair doing in Afghanistan in 2001? They explain that, being in their late teens and early twenties at that time, they had made a naive, spontaneous decision to travel for free with an aid convoy weeks before a friend's wedding, due to take place in Pakistan.

Mr. Ahmed admits they had a secret agenda for entering Afghanistan, but it wasn't to join al-Qaeda.

"Aid work was probably 5% of it. Our main reason was just to go and sightsee really and smoke some dope."

Does the former prison guard believe them? Yes, says Mr. Neely, who thinks it was a case of "wrong place, wrong time."

Both sides are beginning to bond, yet toward the end, Mr. Neely has a confession of his own. It threatens to destroy the mood of reconciliation.

He is deeply ashamed of an incident in which he "slammed" an elderly prisoner's head against the floor.

Mr. Neely recalls that he thought he had been under attack because the man kept trying to rise to his feet. But weeks later he discovered the prisoner thought he was being placed on his knees to be executed and believed he was fighting for his life.

Mr. Ahmed is speechless, then evidently conflicted as he wrestles in his mind with whether or not he can forgive. Eventually he says he can.... "[Brandon has] realized what he did was wrong and he's living with it and suffering with it. As long as he knows what he did was wrong, that's the main thing."

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Rasul says, "If you ever come to Britain again, you are welcome to stay in my home." Ω

Catholic Worker Calendar

Robert Gibbings

February 18 & March 18—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer/ Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of the Clark University on Main Street.

February 5 & March 5—Vigil Against War & Abortion: Join us for a vigil starting outside the US military recruiting station on Park Ave. and ending across from the Planned Parenthood building on Pleasant St. in Worcester. Noon to 1 P.M.

February 8, 24, & March 8, 22 — Mass: Join us in prayer and song at 7:30 P.M. 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

February 10— "I Come from Bagdhad": Fouad Abdulameer, an Iraqi who fled his homeland at 14 and is now a student at Worcester's Clark Univesity, tells his story. Gather at 7:00 P.M. 52 Mason St. Refreshments to follow.

For more information on events, please call: 508 753-3588.

Mason Street Musings

I write on the day after Christmas—11 days remain to celebrate the season. Tomorrow is the feast of the Holy Family, appropriate for this time of year. Scott, Claire, Justin, Grace, Patrick, Aiden, and Anthony have squeezed into their cars are driving to New Hampshire to visit family. Dave is visiting his relatives in Iowa and Minnesota. I just returned to Mason Street after having spent a few days with my parents and siblings, who are gathered from the far corners of the globe. The snow is melting, my stomach over-full, and the house is unusually quiet. Our guests are out in the city on this, the first day in weeks when the temperature has risen above freezing. Rao, from India, is at a university library, reading, researching, and expanding his already wonderfully knowledgeable mind. Lorenz, our guest from Albania, is visiting his brother. Victoria, our Salvadoran guest, is working, blissful after having spent most of the week with her eldest son, recently arrived in Worcester. Tonight we will share a simple meal of butternut squash soup, and in the morning after Mass, I will practice my new recipe for soaked whole-grain pancakes.

Today the Church commemorates Saint Stephen, a man about whom I have thought often, since my birthday falls on his feast. Stephen is an especially good saint to whom Catholic Workers can pray and strive to emulate, for he "comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable," and witnessed to the nonviolent, forgiving love of God. Stephen was chosen by the Apostles as one of seven to provide material support for the widows and poor members of the early Christian community. He pointed out the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of the members of the Sanhedrin when he was unjustly called before them. And finally, as Stephen

Grace Duffy

was being stoned to death, he asked God to forgive his murderers. "**Lord do not hold this sin against them**" (Acts 7:60). It is believed that these final words of forgiveness played a significant role in the conversion of Saint Paul—a testament to the redemptive value of nonviolent love.

I think today also of Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, as I prepare to leave Worcester and travel west to Dubuque, Iowa, where I will join the work of the New Hope Catholic Worker Farm community. The members of New Hope are attempting to put into practice Peter's vision of an "agronomic university," where workers, scholars, and the poor can learn from each other and where Catholics can "take up this back-to-the-land problem and put it into operation." In his Easy Essay "Regard for the Soil," Peter quotes the American novelist Andre Nelson Lytle who said, "It is in fact impossible for any culture to be sound and healthy without a proper respect for the soil, no matter how many urban dwellers think that their food comes from groceries and delicatessens or their milk from tin cans. " I hope we can make Peter proud.

My approaching departure causes me to reflect on all I have learned here at this "school" of the Saints Francis and Thérèse Catholic Worker, of which I have been a student for about ten years. It is here where I learned to cook for 12 (and more); here where I learned that security really does come from God, and not from money in the bank; here where I learned that I can live without a lock on my front door (even in the city); and here where I learned that every person who comes to our door must be treated as Christ.

I leave with the assurance that the work of the members of this household will continue, and that your prayers and financial support during these cold months will enable that to happen. God bless you. Ω **Brenna**

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